

24  
1910

# A MESSAGE

FROM THE

## FORTIES.



A

FREE TRADE MASQUE.



FREE TRADE UNION,

8, Victoria Street, S.W.



National Library of Scotland



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FREE TRADE UNION,

8, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.

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A Message from the  
'Forties,

BEING

A STORY OF PROTECTION

Adapted from "The Christmas Carol"  
of Charles Dickens,

BY

MRS. ALFRED MOND.

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Price - - - - SIXPENCE.

Scene - - - Scrooge's Office.

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**CHARACTERS PRESENTED :**

SCROOGE - - A reactionary City Merchant, and  
a strong Tariff Reformer.

BOB HATCHETT - Scrooge's Clerk.

SCROOGE'S NEPHEW A young up-to-date business man

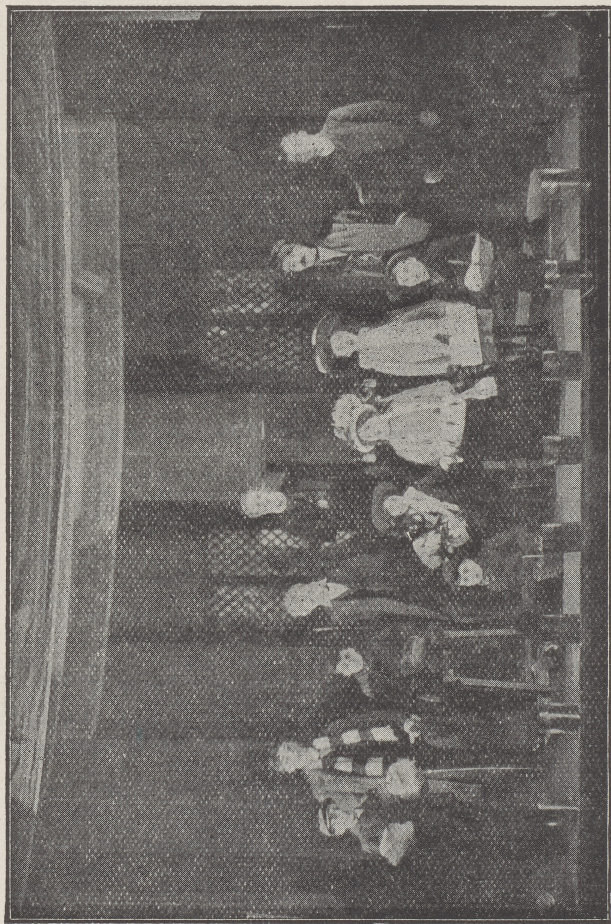
A BOGUS UNEMPLOYED  
WORKMAN - A Tariff Reform Agent in disguise.

COBDEN'S GHOST - Who recalls the Horrors of  
Protection.

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**CHORUS OF CHILDREN.**





The above picture represents the characters, with Mrs. Alfred Mond, the writer of the play, in the centre of the group.—(From *The Free Trader*, January, 1909.)

# "A Message from the 'Forties."

*Free Trade Adaptation of "Christmas Carol."*

A most pleasant and profitable rapprochement between politics and the drama was celebrated last night at the Balham Assembly Rooms in the production of a "purely political play" by Mrs. Alfred Mond, entitled "A Message from the 'Forties."

The little piece, of which this was the first London performance, proved, of course, an adaptation of Dickens' famous "Christmas Carol."

Following the exact lines of the story, Mrs. Mond has managed none the less to drive home the lesson of Free Trade at every turn in the most convincing fashion.

The ghost actually concerned in the play is, it may be mentioned, not Marley's, but Cobden's. As in the book, Scrooge is a grumbler, grasping old Tariff Reform employer who is really very rich, but refuses to give Bob Hatchett, his clerk, either a Christmas holiday or a rise in wages.

"Why should you have a holiday?" he asks. "Why, you're always having holidays and half-holidays! They don't do that in Germany."

"I want to have my Christmas dinner with my family," says Hatchett.

"Dinner!" roars Scrooge. "Humbug! I suppose you want roast beef and plum-pudding? Why, if you lived in Germany you would be eating horse-flesh, dripping instead of lard, and black bread, eh?"

"Good heavens, sir," Hatchett exclaims. "Why, I thought you said the poor in Germany were all so well off because they had Tariff Reform! Now I hear that their hours are longer, their wages lower, and their food relatively dearer than ours over here!"

Lastly, Scrooge goes to sleep, and the ghost of Cobden appears to him. The ghost reminds him, by a magic-lantern vision of the terrible state of affairs in the old days of Protection and black bread. He shows him also a pageant-like procession of the great Free Trade Chancellors—Sir Robert Peel, Gladstone, Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Goschen, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. Ritchie, and Sir William Harcourt—"all united on this one issue."

He reminds Scrooge that Lord Beaconsfield himself said, "Protection is not only dead, but damned." He brings to his memory the dependence of the mercantile marine—and so, possibly, of the power of Great Britain on the seas—upon Free Trade. He recalls in thrilling pictures the Stockport riots, when men broke into a workhouse to feed their starving wives and children. "Can you condemn them," ask the ghost, "if you put taxes on their blood?"

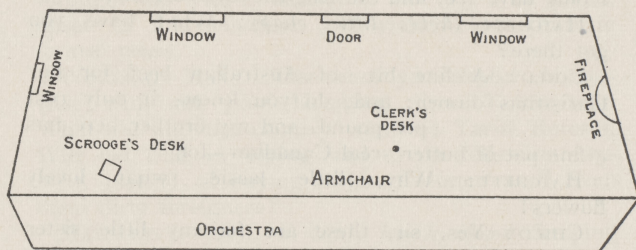
Waking in horror from his dream, Scrooge, it need hardly be said, decides to abjure Tariff Reform for ever.

It may be added that the little play owed much to the capital acting of Mr. Noel Curtis Bennett, the son of the well-known Bow Street magistrate.—*Daily Chronicle*, January 26th, 1909.



# A Message from the 'Forties.

## A FREE TRADE MASQUE.



SCENE—SCROOGE'S OFFICE.

[An old-fashioned business office, scantily and badly furnished, book-cases all round the room; nearly dark. On curtain rising, BOB HATCHETT is found sitting at desk C.]

[Children run by laughing, singing, etc.

“ Tramp, tramp, tramp upon Protection.”

Some come in and wish HATCHETT a “ Merry Christmas.”]

CHILDREN : Merry Christmas, Mr. Hatchett.

HATCHETT : Merry Christmas to you all ! What are you taking home for Christmas to mother ?

CHILD : I've got bananas. Father says they come from the West Indies, and as there is no duty, I got this bunch for sixpence.

HATCHETT : And what have you got ?

CHILD : Aren't these fine loaves ?—only fourpence halfpenny each ; rather different from what the little German children take home. There the colour is black, and the price nearly double ; and, besides, I have plums and candied peel, which come all the way from Greece, for the pudding.

HATCHETT: And you, my little lassie?

CHILD: I have such lovely toys for Tiny Tim. A beautiful box of soldiers and such a lovely stable, and, you know, they are none the worse for having been made in Switzerland. You see, I only have 1/6, and the English toys cost more.

HATCHETT (*holds little chap*): What have you got there?

CHILD: A fine bit of Australian beef for our Christmas dinner; and, do you know, it only cost per pound, and my brother here has a fine pat of butter—real Canadian—for

HATCHETT: Why, little lassie, what lovely flowers!

CHILD: Yes, sir, these are for my little sister who is ill in the hospital. They will cheer her heart and help to brighten the room. They told me they came all the way from France.

HATCHETT: Well, run along, children, and don't drop your precious goods on the way.

[*Comes from the door, shutting it.*]

HATCHETT: Ah! how different when I was a boy. To see those little chaps with all that fruit; and, as for butter, dripping was good enough for us even at Christmas time. Wages didn't run to the real thing. Yes, and what a miserable article a loaf of bread was, and how careful we had to be with the crumbs. None for the birds those days. They'll enjoy their Christmas pudding, and toys, and sweet flowers. Ah! yes, it was a different thing in my day; and even if the things had *not* been too dear, we hadn't the wages to pay for them. I wonder if my poor little wage is to be docked this year, and whether Mr. Scrooge will let me spend Christmas day at home. If he does, I am afraid Tiny Tim won't get that wooden horse he's fancied so long. Poor little chap!

[*Enter Working Man.*]

WORKING MAN: Scrooge at home?

HATCHETT: No, Mr. Scrooge is out for the present, but I expect him to return shortly. Will you wait, or will you leave a message for him?



WORKING MAN: Well, guv'ner, we're all a bit short at this time, and I thought as how Mr. Scrooge would help a pal.

HATCHETT: I am sorry; but I fear you will be disappointed. Mr. Scrooge and I have just been through the year's accounts, and he was rather upset to find business had yielded less than in former years.

WORKING MAN: 'Ow can yer expect hother-wise with all your blooming Free Trade talk. What we and the country wants is Tariff Reform. Why not lend an 'elping 'and to yer fellow-countrymen, instead of buying a lot of rotten stuff from them dirty foreigners?

HATCHETT: Well, I don't know about keeping out foreign articles. From what I saw the children just now carrying home to their parents for Christmas, I should say we could hardly do without help from foreign lands. And, then, don't forget all these foreign goods which have been paid for with our goods which we have sent abroad, and unless we wanted and were able to pay for them, the foreigner wouldn't send them. If we buy less goods from other countries, they can buy less from us, and, you stupid fellow, throw a lot more people out of work.

WORKING MAN: Yer wouldn't talk like that if yer guv'ner were 'ere. 'E's one of them Tariff Reformers!

HATCHETT: I am sorry to say Mr. Scrooge is. Like many another, he has not gone with the times. Other men have been willing to adopt newer methods, while my master always said: "The old way is quite good enough for me"; and now he finds business is slack, and blames his country, instead of taking the blame on his own shoulders. Now he wants his country to change. Why didn't he change before it became too late?

WORKING MAN: That's all my eye! That's what they call Cobden politics, that is! I've got some important business round the corner! I think I'll look back in a quarter of an hour or so.

HATCHETT: Ah, quite so. I'm afraid your business round the corner means drink, my friend?

WORKING MAN: Why shouldn't the working man have his glass of beer?

HATCHETT: I thought you had no money?

WORKING MAN: Money—bless your heart; we chaps ain't short of money. Why, since the introduction of that 'ere Bill we get our drinks for nothing, we do. Lord lum'me, sir! I don't believe in half measures, I don't. Give me a quart. None of yer bloomin' pot-luck for me!

HATCHETT: Quite so. You prefer pot-house luck, don't you?

WORKING MAN: Yes, I do, sir. 'Alf and 'alf is my ticket. But why shouldn't I?

[EXIT.]

[SCROOGE enters. Children say "Merry Christmas." SCROOGE slams door. He is a wizened, broken old man.]

SCROOGE (to children): Off with you! Off with you all! Merry Christmas, indeed!

[HATCHETT helps him off with coat and hat, and brushes off snow.]

SCROOGE: You'll want all day to-morrow, I suppose!

HATCHETT: If it's quite convenient, sir?

SCROOGE: It is not convenient, and it is not fair. If I was to stop two and sixpence for it, you'd think yourself ill-used, I'll be bound; and yet, when I pay a day's wages for no work—

HATCHETT: But it's only once a year, sir!

SCROOGE: That's no excuse for picking a man's pocket every 25th December. Why should you have a holiday? Why, you're always having holidays and half-holidays! They don't do that in Germany.

HATCHETT: I want to have my Christmas dinner with my family.

SCROOGE: Dinner—er—humbug! Sentimental rot! What do you want with Christmas dinner? I suppose you want roast beef, plum pudding, bottle of port, eh? Why, if you lived in Germany



you would be eating horse-flesh, dripping instead of butter, lard, and black bread, eh?

HATCHETT: Good heavens, sir! Why, I thought you said the poor in Germany were all so well off because they had Tariff Reform?

SCROOGE: So they are. But they don't come snivelling round like you do. They eat their horse-flesh with relish.

HATCHETT: Perhaps they do, sir—horse radish, I call it. But the reason is that they have to, because their hours of labour are longer, their wages are lower, and besides, as you know, the prices of food are relatively higher there than they are over here.

SCROOGE: Of course—of course. You're all too rich and lazy now in this country. Give me the good old days. Clerks weren't paid as you are now. Why, in the old Protectionist days clerks didn't come round yapping for holidays, and more wages, and Christmas dinners, and things which ought to be left to their betters. However, it's no good talking. I suppose you must have your holiday. But be here all the earlier next morning. D'ye hear, eh?

HATCHETT: Thank you, sir.

[SCROOGE'S NEPHEW, *heard off, shouting*  
*"Uncle," rushes in. He is a young, good-looking,*  
*prosperous fellow.]*

NEPHEW: "A Merry Christmas," uncle. God save you!

SCROOGE: Bah!—humbug!

NEPHEW: Christmas humbug! Oh, uncle, you don't mean that, I'm sure!

SCROOGE: I do, though, young man. Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough, thanks to Free Trade.

NEPHEW: Come now, what have you got to grumble at, uncle? If I'm poor, you're rich enough, thanks to Free Trade, anyway.

SCROOGE: Bah!—humbug! I tell you, England's going to the dogs.

NEPHEW: Oh, you must have been reading the silly nonsense of those Tariff Reformers who are damaging British trade by running down their own country. I hear the boss in our bank the other day went to hear Lord Avebury speak.

SCROOGE: Lord Avebury? The great banker, I suppose you mean? Well, what did he say?

NEPHEW: Well, uncle, he said Tariff Reform would prove more disastrous to this country than war, and our boss agrees with him, and says many of us clerks will get the sack and some lower wages if Tariff Reform wins the day in this country.

SCROOGE: That's all very well, but Mr. Balfour says we must broaden the basis of taxation.

NEPHEW: Yes, uncle, and make the people pay so many different taxes, that it is impossible for them to know what taxes they are paying, and so make them think they are paying nothing at all.

SCROOGE: Serve 'em right! That's Tariff Reform.

NEPHEW: But, uncle, that's not fair—it's bamboozling the people.

SCROOGE: 'Course it is, and serve 'em right, too; but we're not going to tax them. We are going to put a duty on a large number of articles.

NEPHEW: Yes, uncle, but taxes are paid by people, not by the articles, and by this means the prices of home production will be raised without producing any revenue.

SCROOGE: Bah!—so you say!

NEPHEW: Yes, uncle, and so say all the great economists. Besides, the cost of collecting such a number of taxes will be tremendous, and give a lot of trouble and expense to people in business. These small taxes will soon grow larger, as my American friend says you can't fall half-way down Niagara, you know.

SCROOGE: It's a pity you and your American friend haven't fallen over Niagara all the way.

NEPHEW: But listen, uncle. It would make everything dearer for the working classes and



everybody in this country. Take food. There's bread, fruit, vegetables, eggs, butter, cheese, meat. They'll all be dearer.

SCROOGE: We shall get all those from the Colonies.

NEPHEW: But there will be a duty on even the supplies from the Colonies, who, after all, cannot send us everything we want, and the markets of the entire world must be open to us.

SCROOGE: Markets of the world, fiddlesticks!

NEPHEW: We shall all have to pay more, and you know it. Even the clothes of the working man and his family will be dearer.

SCROOGE: And a good thing, too! Everything is too cheap in this country, anyway.

NEPHEW: You seem to want to make things dearer.

SCROOGE: Why, of course, that's Tariff Reform.

NEPHEW: Did you see what the German Chancellor Büelow said in his speech the other day?

SCROOGE: No, what was it—

NEPHEW: He said that employers must pay higher wages in Germany, because, owing to the tariff, everything had become so dear that the people cannot live on their present wages and salaries. How would you like to give Hatchett more wages, uncle?

SCROOGE: I shouldn't—bah—humbug!—and no more will the German or any other employers. People are very fond of talking of higher wages, especially when they don't pay any.

NEPHEW: Come, uncle, don't be cross!

SCROOGE: What else can I be when I live in such a world of fools as this. Free Trade, indeed! What good has it ever done you, eh?

NEPHEW: It gives me my employment and good salary, and has enabled me to live better, and give my wife and family more comfort than I could under a tariff; and, therefore, uncle, I believe that it has done me good, and I say, God bless it!

[HATCHETT, who has been listening, here  
applauds.]

SCROOGE: Let me hear another word from you, sir, and you'll lose your situation. (*Turns to nephew*). You're quite a wonderful speaker, sir. I wonder you don't go into Parliament!

NEPHEW: Well, don't be angry, uncle. Come and have Christmas dinner with us to-morrow.

SCROOGE: I'll see you d——d first.

NEPHEW: Why, uncle, why? You'll be all alone, and we'll give you the best we can provide—a hearty, even if a humble, meal.

[SCROOGE grunts.]

Why can't we be friends?

SCROOGE: Good afternoon.

NEPHEW: Well—A Merry Christmas, Uncle.

SCROOGE: Good afternoon.

NEPHEW: And a Happy New Year.

SCROOGE: Good afternoon.

[NEPHEW retires.]

And good riddance to bad rubbish. Here! get me that speech of Mr. Balfour's that he made in Birmingham. That'll soon settle the Free Traders.

HATCHETT: But I thought Mr. Balfour said he was a Free Trader?

SCROOGE: What do you know about it? What does anybody know about it? Go on with your work.

[Enter gentleman, smartly dressed, walks R to SCROOGE.]

GENTLEMAN: Scrooge & Morley's, I believe. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE: Yes; what do you want with me?

GENTLEMAN: At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and destitute who suffer greatly at the present time.

SCROOGE: Are there no prisons?

GENTLEMAN: Plenty of prisons.

SCROOGE: And the workhouses—are they still in operation?



GENTLEMAN : They are. I only wish I could say they were not.

SCROOGE : Oh ! I was afraid from what you said that something had occurred to stop them in their usual course.

GENTLEMAN : What shall I put you down for ?

SCROOGE : Nothing.

GENTLEMAN : You wish to be anonymous ?

SCROOGE : I wish to be let alone. I help to support the establishments you have mentioned—they cost enough—and those who are badly off must go there.

GENTLEMAN : Many would rather die.

SCROOGE : If they would rather die, they had better do it and decrease the surplus population. Besides—excuse me—I don't know that.

GENTLEMAN : But you might know it.

SCROOGE : It's not my business.

GENTLEMAN : Yes, sir ; but our business is the business of the Empire, and, you know, one of the principles of Empire is the increase of population.

SCROOGE : It's enough for a man to understand his own business and not interfere with other people's.

GENTLEMAN : I quite agree as to that, sir, but you, as a Tariff Reformer, wish to interfere with everybody's business ; no business will be safe from interference by the State. Mr. Cobden used to say Protection means putting the custom-house officers to collect taxes for the private individual.

SCROOGE : Ah ! he's dead and gone.

GENTLEMAN : But his work lives ; his spirit is still with us. Perhaps you knew him, sir ?

SCROOGE : Cobden ? Yes, I heard him speak. But that's many years ago, and I've forgotten all that by now. Good afternoon, sir.

GENTLEMAN : Good afternoon. (*Exit.*)

HATCHETT : It's good to hear you mention Mr. Cobden, sir. You often spoke of him in the days gone by, and what a great man he was.

SCROOGE : Oh, there are other men now. I want to read this speech of Mr. Balfour's. I want to find

out whether he agrees with Mr. Chamberlain, and if he is going to put on a tax to benefit me. How am I to find out all that if I am to be incessantly interrupted—bothered with these people talking a lot of nonsense. You're just as bad. Finished your work? Go home and leave me in peace. Now, what does he say? Broaden the basis of taxation, and Chamberlain says if you want to give a preference to the Colonies you must tax food.

[HATCHETT gets ready to go, and as he gets to door he wishes SCROOGE a "Merry Christmas."]

SCROOGE: Bah, humbug! (*Begins reading Bal-four's speech.*)

[Enter an UNEMPLOYED WORKMAN through door C.]

SCROOGE (*very angry at interruption*): Now what do you want?

UNEMPLOYED WORKMAN: "Merry Christmas," guv'ner!

SCROOGE: Humbug!

WORKING MAN: Yes, ain't it humbug, guv'ner. Who's to 'ave a merry Christmas in these days of foreign competition? I've been out o' work months, and maybe I thought as 'ow you'd 'elp a pore feller with a little to buy a Christmas dinner and drink your very good 'ealth.

SCROOGE: Oh, so you're out of work, are you? What do you do?

WORKING MAN: I make tombstones, sir, and trade's so bad because of those Italian chaps underselling us. And people don't die as they used to, so there ain't so many tombstones wanted.

SCROOGE: How long were you in your last job?

WORKING MAN: Oh, a matter of three weeks or so.

SCROOGE: Drink, I suppose!

WORKING MAN: Well, you know as 'ow they always wanted to deprive a working man of his glass of beer.

SCROOGEH: And you call yourself unemployed, I suppose. I should call you unemployable. And



it's to please and help the likes of you that I am to pay more for my tombstone!

WORKING MAN: Well, sir, it's only once in a way as 'ow yer 'ave to die, so to speak.

SCROOGE: Get out! I'm not going to have a tax on tombstones and pay more for them to help you. And I don't believe you are a mason at all. Your story is all humbug.

WORKING MAN: And you calls yourself a Tariff Reformer? It's quite right. I'm not a genuine working man, but I'm paid two pounds a week to say I am and to teach Tariff Reform up and down the country, and as you are a member of the Tariff Reform Commission, I thought you might help a pal.

SCROOGE (*jumps up furious*): And you dare to come to me pretending you're out of work and wanting money, and all the time you're drawing forty shillings per week from the Tariff Reform League! Off with you! You're enough to make one become a Free Trader on the spot.

[*Exit WORKING MAN.*]

Am I never to be left in peace, just when I want to study all this about taxation and to find out where I come in.

[*SCROOGE locks the door, puts on a dressing-gown and night-cap, and sits down by fire.*]

SCROOGE: It's all humbug, humbug. Why shouldn't the working man pay his share of taxes; he pays too little and has everything done for him. Pampered with pensions, free education for his children, always wanting more wages and less work, it wasn't like that when I was a young man. We had Protection and Corn Laws. They were grateful then to work long hours for little money, and were kept in their right place. It's all the fault of that fellow Cobden and his friends. Since he got duties on bread done away with, the country has been going to the dogs. And the working classes think themselves as good as their betters with their Trade Unions and Labour Members. Ah! with a little Tariff Reform we'll soon set that

right. Now for Mr. Balfour. (*Pause: Mumbling in sleepy voice.*) Broadening the basis of taxation, Preference, Colonial Conference, reciprocity, taxing the foreigner. What could Cobden say to that, eh, Balfour, Chamberlain? Dear, how sleepy I'm getting.

[*Darkness.*]

[*Enter COBDEN'S GHOST. Clinking of chains, thunder, etc.*]

SCROOGE: Who are you?

COBDEN'S GHOST: I am the ghost of Richard Cobden.

SCROOGE: What do you want with me? I thought your voice was silenced for ever, and you and your work long since forgotten.

COBDEN'S GHOST: No, my spirit walks abroad among my fellow-men, and travels far and wide, for those who have forgotten must learn again the bitter lesson of the past.

SCROOGE: What are those chains?

COBDEN'S GHOST: These are the chains that were forged by the Bread Tax, link by link and yard by yard girded round the people of England, and which I, after years of toil, yea, even persecution, struck from off the fettered limbs of the poor.

SCROOGE: What business have you with me?

COBDEN'S GHOST: Mankind is my business; the common welfare is my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence are my business; and, therefore, Free Trade is my business.

SCROOGE: Humbug! This is all fine talk. How has your Free Trade benefited my business?

COBDEN'S GHOST: If it has not benefited your business it is your own fault. You have not kept up with the times. You have not taken advantage of the immense competition, increase in the demand for all goods, which Free Trade has made and maintains. Have you forgotten the old days before Free Trade? What condition was the country in then?



SCROOGE: Anyway, corn was dearer in those days, and the farmer was better off in consequence.

COBDEN'S GHOST: Ah, remember agriculture was in decay, although there was a tax on corn. Cotton mills idle in Lancashire, bread riots and famine over the country, merchants bankrupt, and all business at a standstill. Did your business benefit by that?

SCROOGE: All I know, in those days, my clerks received less pay and worked longer hours, and, although food was dearer and less plentiful, there were none of the ridiculous wages demanded by the working classes these days.

COBDEN'S GHOST: Look at the change! Look at the trade of England to-day and then; look at its population, look at its homes and the people in them. I don't know what your business is, but, what you know perfectly well, the growth and prosperity of this great Empire are due to England's freedom of commerce, and if there are exceptions, and, of course, there are, they cannot be weighed in the balance by the side of the incalculable advantages enjoyed by the vast community of this country.

SCROOGE: Well, all I know is, *I* am no better off.

COBDEN'S GHOST: Men like you grumble about higher wages, but forget that the greater efficiency of labour and the greater purchasing power and demand of the millions have created our modern commerce. If your business has not grown with the times, it is your fault and not that of my policy.

SCROOGE (*in doubtful tones*): Oh, that is all very well!

COBDEN'S GHOST: Think, think again before you decide from purely selfish motives to plunge the country back into the dark days of the past. I will pass in review those scenes which seem so strangely to have escaped your memory. See and mark for yourself.

TABLEAUX.

*These can best be shown by means of magic lantern (at back of audience). Sheet is rolled up above back cloth, and when stage is darkened for ghost's entrance sheet is rolled down. Ghost and Scrooge must be at opposite sides of stage.*

PORTRAITS OF THE GREAT FREE TRADERS FROM  
SIR ROBERT PEEL

TO THE

PRESENT DAY.

MERCANTILE MARINE.

SHOP SLIDE.

WE MUST PAY. (*Sidney Smith.*)

STOCKPORT RIOTS.

UNEMPLOYED RIOTS IN BERLIN.

SCROOGE: Who is this?

COBDEN'S GHOST: First, I show you the man who worked with me during those thirty years to free your country—

JOHN BRIGHT.

And now I will show you the great Tory leader, whose famous words should ever live in our memories.

SCROOGE: What were they, and who spoke them?

COBDEN'S GHOST: It was Lord Beaconsfield who said—"Protection is not only dead, but damned."

And now this long line of England's great chancellors—Sir Robert Peel, Gladstone, Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Goschen, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. Ritchie, and Sir William Harcourt—men of all shades of political opinion, uniting in spirit on this one issue. The taxing of the people's food.

THE MERCANTILE MARINE.

Remember the power of Great Britain on the Seas. Nurtured on the bosom of Free Trade, the envy and admiration of all protected countries. See, here, our great Mercantile Marine that carries the goods of the entire world to every quarter of the



globe. Herein lies our strength, which, should you touch or injure in any way, Great Britain will be like the mighty Samson shorn.

#### THE SHOP SLIDE.

Look on this picture which puts before you in simplest form the purchasing power of the country under Protection as compared with Free Trade. You will notice the prices on the various articles exposed for sale and compare them with those of countries tied and bound by Protection.

WE MUST PAY. (*Sidney Smith.*)

SCROOGE: What is this?

GHOST: Here I show you the words of Sidney Smith. Do they not come as a message to you at this hour?

[*Here the GHOST reads "We Must Pay."*]

SCROOGE: Taxes! Taxes! Taxes!

#### STOCKPORT RIOTS.

GHOST: "Give us this day our daily bread." (*Pause.*) Do you see that? Men breaking open a workhouse to feed their starving wives and children. Can you condemn them if you put taxes on their blood? How well I remember a hundred wedding-rings pawned in a single week to provide bread; and of another case where men lived on boiled nettles and dug up the decayed carcass of a cow rather than die of hunger!

SCROOGE: Your words fill me with horror. But I can't help that, can I? These awful scenes and terrible sufferings do not exist in Protected Germany.

#### UNEMPLOYED RIOTS IN BERLIN.

GHOST: Look at this, then, you foolish man! There's a country protected up to the eyes, which we hold forth as exemplary, as model, as our economic master and oppressor. What are the facts? Look, false, foolish man. Whereas we have paid off £50,000,000 out of the £150,000,000 contracted over the war in your pearl Germany, that model, that country to which you foolish Protectionists point as so perfect, only a short while ago had a miniature unemployed revolution, and

people, even in Berlin, cried, "Take off those taxes!"

SCROOGE: The light is breaking in on me.

GHOST: Now I leave you. Will you still harden your heart against those memories I have re-awakened in your breast? Will you again rivet these chains on the poor of England? You are an old man, but, remember, man is never too old to do some useful work for his country. You have still time, you have still opportunity. There are still many spheres of interest in which you can serve the country and its great ideal—the peace and good-will among men, purity in public life—which, I tell you, are the ideals of Free Trade.

[GHOST fades.]

[SCROOGE wakes up.]

SCROOGE: What strange visions I have seen! How the old days which I had forgotten came back to me. I remember them now, I *do* recall the pitiable sight of able-bodied men rioting for bread and clamouring for work. Tariff Reform does not mean work for all; the week's money under those false conditions would not go as far as now. How could I have been deceived by the fallacies and false promises of the Tariff Reformers? My eyes are opened. I must work with all my soul for the maintenance of *Free Trade*, untaxed food, and free imports for the people of the greatest Empire the world has ever known.

[SCROOGE rushes to door, throws it open.

*The children run past outside, singing—*

*"Tramp, tramp, tramp upon Protection."]*

SCROOGE (*shouting*): "A Merry Christmas—a Merry Christmas," children. Go home to your untaxed dinners, and thank God England is still Free Trade.

[CURTAIN.]



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